

# BLACK LIGHT

Astro Gets His Answer at Last

BY ALAN BRAGHAMPTON

Drawing by George Brehm



She Gave a Cry as She Felt His Arms Take Her

IT had been a curious wooing; for Astro, Seer of Secrets, so confident in other matters, so keen in his insight into human nature, so quick to think and bold to act, had shown from the first a strange timidity when it came to a personal relation with Valeska, his assistant. His manner had long been merely brotherly, modified only by his relation as instructor to her. But of late he had begun to make tentative suggestions, as if to try and sound her affection. From these Valeska had instinctively warned him off, and his tact had made him accede to her wishes. It seemed as if he feared to lose her by speaking too soon.

But at last he had spoken. The words had sprung unpremeditated from his lips, on the surging impulse of the moment. Nor were they the fruit of any dramatic moment. Merely the sight of her in her characteristic attitude at the table, her blond head illumined by the electric light, and a sudden terror struck him lest destiny should sweep them apart and write the story of their two years' friendship in the chronicles of the past. So many things in his life had faded like autumn leaves! He must be sure of her, sure of having her beside him always, sure of the inspiration of her companionship. The speech came in an instant in a passionate demand.

It had appeared to frighten her for the moment, as if it was a question she had long been dreading. She had asked for time in which to consider it, and he had reluctantly consented. Since then he had not mentioned the subject; but he had watched her silently with constraint in his manner.

Valeska had found it hard to explain why she had been unwilling to answer; but, as she went over and over the question, it seemed to her that their friendship had been merely the product of propinquity. They had been thrown together continually, had incurred danger, and had enjoyed victory. How, then, could she be sure that it was no more than friendship, a common interest in their work? Love, she had always thought, should come with a flash of sudden illumination, as a divine gift, as a sudden wonder, convincing in its very mystery. But her feeling—was it not the mere result of a daily comradeship? Was it a vital, irresistible appeal of the soul? She found him handsome, generous, talented, finely perceptive, and delicate; but was this all? Her love, if it was love, spoke of a commonplace tongue—and she had wanted words of fire. So, for a week, she went over

and over the subject, subjecting herself and Astro to a searching criticism, and as yet she had found no answer.

HE came into the room one morning, carrying from his laboratory a large black, square object, which he set on the table. She looked at it, and then her eyes questioned him.

"It is a lantern of a special kind," he said. "It casts black light."

"Black light!" Her delicate brows rose.

"That's what Dr. Le Bon calls it. You see, the visible spectrum (or all the light we can see) is only about one per cent. of all the vibrant energy cast by the sun or any other luminous body. Beyond that visible spectrum lie at one end the ultra-violet rays, and at the other the infrared. I have here a lighted lantern inclosed in an opaque box, which cuts off all the visible rays, but permits the other ninety-nine per cent. to pass through. The flame inside is now casting rays of black light through the opaque screen,—black, because they are invisible; light, because they will illuminate certain objects. I want you to witness an experiment. You recall the celebrated interference experiment of Fresnel, in which light added to light produced darkness? Well, I shall show you how darkness added to darkness may give birth to light. It is Le Bon's discovery. Now come into my dark room, and I'll show it to you."

At the farther end of the laboratory he opened a door which led into a small, dark anteroom. Entering this, and closing the laboratory door, he opened one into the dark room, carrying the dark lantern. They both entered the inner dark room, which was ventilated through a circuitous lightproof pipe. The room was absolutely black; but Astro, well used to the place, feeling his way with his hands, set the lantern on a table.

"Upon a shelf here," he said, "is a Chinese image of Buddha, which some weeks ago I coated with phosphorescent sulphid of calcium. By this time all its luminosity is gone, and it is absolutely invisible. But now I shall direct the invisible rays of black light from this lantern upon it. Watch!"

As she waited there in the silence and the dark, Valeska strained her eyes for nearly a minute in vain. Then a faint luminous blur was apparent. It gathered intensity and showed a triangle of violet radiance. In another minute it had taken the form of a squatting Buddha and glowed plainly, the only visible thing in the room.

"It's wonderful!" she breathed.

"Oh, that's not half that can be done with black light," Astro said, as he took the lantern and led the way out. "With it one can photograph objects through an opaque screen, when they are illuminated by ordinary sunlight. By using a screen of sulphid of zinc, and training this black light upon an object, one could see it even at midnight, half a mile away."

WHEN they came out into the great studio, he dropped to his favorite place on the divan and went on. "Phosphorescence is a queer thing, Valeska. It hasn't been half understood till lately, when what is called 'The New Physics' came into being through the discoveries in radioactivity by M. and Mme. Curie. It used to be thought that after a phosphorescent object had remained in the dark for awhile and it had ceased to be luminous, it ceased its radioactivity, and needed a new bath of light to make it act again. But Le Bon found that it would radiate for months after all visible glow had disappeared. We have proved it with this black light just now."

He had taken up his narghile and sat looking off into space with a mystic expression on his face. It was one of his dreamy, philosophical moments. Va-

leska recognized the mood and waited for the inevitable parable. For, to Astro the Seer, modern science was but an allegory of the intellect and the emotions.

"Isn't it like absence? While our friend is present, he is bathed in the matter of fact light of day; he is radiant, luminous. When he disappears, for a time that impression of him lasts, like the phosphorescent glow. Then, the light fades and we begin to forget,—all save those who truly love, who truly know, whose soul can still perceive the mysterious astral black light he radiates through the dark. His influence persists, transmuted from mental into psychic energy. Selah!"

He dropped his narghile and sat with folded hands, looking at her as if she was miles away. His smile was the calm expression of a bronze Buddha.

But Valeska took the parable to herself eagerly. "Yes, yes, it's true, and that's just what I need to know before I give you the answer you want! I don't know whether I really love you or not,—you're too near me, too intermingled with my life and my work. If I could try that test of absence, if I could wait till your phosphorescence fades out, then I could tell if I was or was not affected by your black light. I'd know then just what you were to me—alone in the dark!"

"Shall we try it?" he asked gently. "Shall I disappear for a week, say?"

"Ah, I'm afraid it would take at least a month!" she said.

He laughed. "Well, as long as you like."

"Will you really?"

He bowed gravely. "I shall disappear to-morrow. You may use the studio as you please; and, when you've found out,—whether or not you can be affected by my psychic black light,—you will let me know."

DO I care? Do I care enough for him?" Valeska asked herself the next morning as she walked to the studio. She had thought of it almost all night; she had risen with the question on her lips. She had seen him every day for two years. The thought that to-day, and perhaps for a week or a month, she would not see him, gave her a strange feeling. Was it a relief, or a pain? As yet, she could not decide.

As she entered the studio it seemed strange not to find him there, at first. Then, insensibly she began to find it hard to believe that he was not there. Everything suggested his presence,—the curiosities he had collected, the weapons, the Egyptian sculptures, tapestries, gems,—all evidences of his taste and his researches. She could not rid herself of the feeling that at any moment he might come in. He was near her, somewhere, waiting and watching for her.

But this, she said to herself, was only the effect of the familiar environment in which she had been used to see him. But it became at last too strong, too insistent. Surely she could never decide till she sought a new atmosphere. She was sorry that she had not disappeared, instead of Astro. But at least she could leave the studio and be alone for awhile, to think it out. As she opened the outer door, she heard the soft ringing of the electric bell in the studio which warned them of visitors. It still rang as she closed the door, and it gave her an uncanny feeling,—the one spark of life in that dead, empty place. She hurried away and walked swiftly toward the park.

DO I care?" Valeska had little doubt of it when the next morning she walked to the studio. One day had made her sure. She wanted to see Astro again more than she wanted anything in the world! The day had been empty and vapid. She had scarcely reached the reservoir before she knew what a fool she had been ever to doubt. The product of mere propinquity or not, the feeling she had for him was paramount over every other emotion. She wanted him back, to see him, hear him, and—well, he would find out what else!

Again the empty studio smote her with the strange feeling that, despite the fact that she did not meet him there, he was near her. Now it was a tantalizing thought. Why had she not arranged how to notify him? She had been so sure she would need a month, that she had not asked where he was going, and she had now no means of letting him know. It was absurd! Must she wait for him to write?

After all, had she really no means of discovering his whereabouts? She looked eagerly about the studio. For two years she had been his assistant in unraveling mysteries. Why should she not now profit by her apprenticeship? But how?

It came to her then that it was in a way by means of black light that he had worked. Most people saw only the outward and visible signs,—the one per cent. of facts that were luminous and obvious. His delicate mind registered the infrared rays of psychology. He vibrated to the ultraviolet waves. Could



she not do as well? She was a woman and had intuitions as well as intellect; she had emotions finer than men's. But her emotions told her that Astro was still there in the studio. She could not believe, quite, in his absence. Everything shrieked his name to her. She could close her eyes and see him before the porphyry sphinx, examining thumbprints at his table, poring over the mimic planets of the orrery, figuring out nativities, gazing into his crystal ball.

"That would never do!" She must keep her imagination as an instrument to work on facts. Where, then, were the facts that could help her? She set herself to investigate the studio thoroughly, inch by inch.

At the first round, she found nothing not in its accustomed place, nothing new, nothing significant. She sat down at his table to think, putting her elbows on the blotter and letting her head drop into her palms. Her eyes fell on the blue blotter. It was changed every morning, ordinarily; but now she noticed pencil markings, a small square drawn with its diagonals. Would this be mere thoughtless penciling, or perhaps a clue? Next, an envelop lying beside the inkstand attracted her attention. Surely that could mean nothing, and yet, as it lay with its face down, the X shaped cross of its gummed edges suggested the diagonals of the square. Either one alone might have no significance; but the two taken together—the hint, perhaps, repeated? She smiled at the very absurdity of so frail a clue.

Then her eyes dropped to the waste paper basket. This should have been emptied yesterday morning, yet it contained a few scraps of paper. She stooped and drew them out, one by one. Three were blank. On the fourth she found the following:

St. Patrick's Cath. . . . 115 10th-ave.  
Pier 83 N. R. . . . . 320 3d-ave

She gave a little cry of triumph. Here at last was something to work upon! She considered the addresses carefully. What did they mean? Astro had never mentioned such places; yet the notes were in his crabbed handwriting. She knew of a certainty that the studio had been cleaned the day before yesterday. This writing, then, must have been put into the basket after they had had their talk. If so, then they meant something. The first thing to do was, of course, to look up these localities and see what she could find there. Saint Patrick's Cathedral

and the pier 83 seemed unlikely places to discover news of Astro's whereabouts; but she determined to visit all four before she returned.

SHE called a taxicab and set out first for Pier 83. This, she found, was at the end of 42d-st. side of the Weehawken ferry. She walked along the wharf, and found a tug laid up there. Besides this, there was no sign of life. What should she do? Ask the tugboat men if they knew where Astro was? That was nonsense! She walked up and down for a half-hour, and discovered nothing which she could possibly twist into evidence. She decided, then, that she would visit the other places, and then, if she found nothing suspicious, return over the ground again.

Saint Patrick's Cathedral next. There it stood, on the corner of the avenue, and she recalled how Astro had once called her attention to its resemblance to a vast Gothic rabbit. The two transepts did resemble a bunny's haunches, and the front towers were like ears. She smiled at the thought; but got no nearer Astro by the pleasantry. She walked inside, sat down on a seat, and thought. What associations could this have with his whereabouts? Why, he was not even a Catholic! He always said he was a Buddhist. Well, if this was a part of the black light his memory emanated, it was black indeed!

In Third-ave. her hopes went up. Number 320 was the entrance to a brick apartment house. There was a sign indicating that flats were to let, and she rang for the janitor. By him she was shown a very pleasant "four rooms and bath" whose windows were on a level with the elevated railroad; but it was as bare as the palm of one's hand, with no lines she could read. She asked tentatively of the other occupants, and found that all, with the exception of a couple of old men, were married families. Yes, a man had been to look at the flat yesterday; but he had worn a beard. Was this a disguise? But if Astro had come there with the intention of renting a flat temporarily, why should he have left the address in the waste basket? And, moreover, why should he have coupled its address with Pier 83?

There remained only the Tenth-ave. address, and this she found to be a huge unoccupied building with shuttered windows, belonging to a gas company. Opposite was a vacant lot piled with lumber refuse, beams, and timbers; on the other side was the gas holder's cylindrical bulk. She could find no watch-

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## AGONES

By James Montgomery Flagg



THE blood red sun, like a mammoth Edam cheese, was dropping by jerks behind the aspens, and a purplish haze was oozing up in the valley where it was wont to ooze on a summer evening in the mountains of old Kentucky.

A young girl was standing on the porch of an old fashioned house with her fluffy head against one of the white pillars. She seemed a part of the landscape; indeed, she would herself have admitted that she was the whole picture,—that was because her papa brought her up (excuse me; I mean raised her). He was Colonel Truxton Snorter.

The Colonel never allowed her to travel, though she often begged him to. He was afraid she might lose her Southern accent if she traveled—and the Snorters would have as readily parted from the Snorter china or the Snorter mahogany, as from their accent. Their accent was very fine indeed, almost as good as the real colored article. You couldn't have detected the difference in the dark.

I must hurry back to the young Miss Snorter, Agones, or she will be making a dent in that pillar I left her leaning her head against. She was beautiful. (Can you ask? Nobody likes homely women even in stories, and I don't intend to jeopardize the chance of the seventeenth edition by leaving any doubt as to her peerlessness.) Agones had the regulation golden bronze hair, luminous violet eyes, cherry red lips that were made to— Well, she was great, that's all!

SHE was wondering whether a silver funnel or a box of stogies would be the most acceptable gift for her dad's birthday. "Well," mused she, "I must decide sometime; so let it be the funnel,—it will be so nice for papa to take his mint juleps with! I'll have his initials engraved on it."

At this moment old Uncle Neb shuffled up the path with a bucket of julep. "Eb'nin', Miss Aggie. I've totin' dishyer to yo' papa. He's des been nacherly teetotalin' for a quatah er hour; so I've fotched erlong nuff ter last him twell teatime—yassum." He went on into the house, chuckling softly to himself.

The sun had finished setting, and the stars took their cue and came tripping out on the dark blue carpet of the sky, modestly and with covert glances at the pale young moon that seemed to hang in the branches of a cottonwood tree back of the woodshed. In the distance the cooing of the buzzards and the yelp of a rabbit intensified the loneliness of the scene; while down the paths and between the trees appeared the incandescent flies, and the locusts and katydids scraped their overshoes on the twigs of the apple tree that brushed its limbs against the upper windows. All nature seemed— Oh, well, if you've

never been in Kentucky on a summer evening! what's the use in trying to tell you? It was marvelous! Evenings anywhere else would be pretty interesting; but in Kentucky—

While Agones was waiting for this description to be finished, she wandered down the path to the garden gate and, leaning her plump arm on top of it, gazed luminously down the road with unseeing eyes. (She wasn't blind, no, not at all, nor did she wear glasses; but I thought it sounded well.) Suddenly awakening from her reverie (her arms had gone to sleep), she saw a dim figure creeping slowly toward her down the road. The figure kept near the fences, avoiding the middle of the road, and with hesitating steps came nearer. It was a man, and he carried a lantern!

"Fitzhugh! You here?" she cried in a scarcely audible shout. Her eyes were seeing again, all right! The man approached and, laying a finger on her lips, exclaimed, "Hush, girl! I'm watched! The revenue stamps—I mean officers—have discovered my still!"

Fitzhugh DeCay kept a still—at least he tried to keep it still—up in the mountains, whose outlines could be dimly perceived through the gathering dusk. (I don't know who was gathering dusk; but the fact remains it was being gathered at the time.)

"Heavens!" cried Agones, clutching at his collar in great alarm.

"Great Scotland! Don't choke me!" he spluttered, wrenching her by the wrist.

"My poor boy!" murmured she. (She wasn't his mother; she just called him that for fun.) "And you had just painted that sign, 'This Way to the Still' with the hand pointing in the opposite direction! What! Bloodhounds? What will you do now, dear?"

"I thought," he answered, "if you could hide me for a few hours in the henhouse or the stable, or some place until I could—"

"Yes, yes!" she cried hurriedly. "And I will get a disguise for you to escape in! Follow me, Fitz!"

She opened the gate softly so as not to bring the household about their ears, and together they went round to the kitchen door and through the pantry, Agones leading the way.

WHEN she had opened the door leading into the front hall, she suddenly stopped. "Papa!" It was the cry of a startled fawn. (Did you ever hear a fawn cry "Papa?"?)

The Colonel was standing with his hands behind his back examining an old print that hung on the wall. He knew that print by heart; but it is rather picturesque to have him standing there, so there he was. On hearing his nom de guerre called, he faced about, and confronted the startled pair.

"Well, I'll be— What does this mean, sir?" (I should say "suh.")

DeCay was plainly embarrassed. He had been forbidden the house by the Colonel, when on a former occasion he and Agones had been surprised by him in the garden when he was having a heart to heart talk with the proud Southern beauty. They had long loved each other,—their passion dated back to the schooldays when Fitz had borrowed another boy's umbrella to take little Agones home under. (The other boy was dusting blackboard erasers on the yard bricks at the time of the borrow. He was a big boy; so he dusted little Fitz's nether garments with a large ruler when he caught him the following day.)

But as I remarked, Fitz was embarrassed; but he managed to stammer, "The still, suh! My still has been discovered, and I'm trying to get away from the revenue officers, and Miss Agones, suh, has taken pity on me, and is going to get me a disguise."

IT was about fifteen minutes later. The moon had gone about her business, the katydids were hushed, and the fireflies had all gone back to the powerhouse after a renewed supply of incandescency.

What is this object in the middle of the path? Well may Mrs. Owl cry "Who, who?" as she sails by on her way mouse-shopping! The object rolls over and waves its limbs feebly in the night air. It is a man! It's Fitz, but disguised. (Oh, yes, he's disguised; his own mother would disown him now.) He painfully sits up, rubs the dust and gravel out of the black cushions that indicate where his eyes had been, dusts his knees with his hands in a bewildered way, and looks down at his clothes. Fifteen minutes ago—ah! that strenuous fifteen!—they had been fairly decent clothes.

He tries to think as he gazes at his hat on the walk, down by the gate. "I was saying I should like a disguise, oh, yes! That was ~~it~~! Dear me! how my head aches, and how the little stars seem to frisk about!"

He is dimly aware that two men have alighted from a buckboard and are coming up the garden path toward him. They flash a lantern in his face. He notices that they look like revenue officers. They turn disappointingly to go. He hears one of them say, "Well, that is not our man." Then, the garden gate clicked, the buckboard whisked away, and all was still again. He crawled on his hands and knees to his hat, and shambled off in the darkness, muttering, "The Colonel sure does wear heavy shoes!"

### BOOK II.

DECA had a hard face. The Colonel spoke in a reminiscing tone. It was the morning after the scene described in Book I.

They were at breakfast, the Colonel and Agones, he in a linen duster, and she in one of those clinging, loose, Mother Hubbard things, and her hair (I could hardly wait to describe this, I wanted to in the last book; but, merciful posterity! I can't do everything at once)—her hair was parted in the middle and brought loosely over her ears into a fluffy knot, low on her neck. (Now, wasn't that worth waiting for?) She toyed idly with a grapefruit. She didn't eat; she only toyed with food.

When the Colonel had delivered that sentence in that retrospective mood, she started perceptibly (If the proofreader finds any original phrases in this novel, I hope he will kindly bear down on his blue pencil). "Why," said she, "do you say that, Daddy?"

The Colonel looked quizzically at his slippered feet. "Because, honey, the first toes of my right foot are dislocated!"

Agones rose from the table—it was a little way she had when a meal was finished. It was not remarkable; but then, she did rise, and, drawing herself up to her full height,—five feet eleven in her mittens,—she spoke with all of her girlish dignity, "Colonel Snorter and father, we must come to an understanding! I had hoped it wouldn't be necessary for sometime to come; but you've forced it on me! Know then, that I love Fitzhugh DeCay!" Her beautiful eyes snapped, and she glared at the calmly questioning face of the Colonel with a look of mingled disgust, pride, apprehension, faith, hope, and charity.

"Agones," he said with measured simplicity (about a yard and a half), "this is a farce!"

"It's no such thing! It's a novel!" was her retort. She tapped her dainty foot on the floor, growing more excited, but losing none of that inherent dignity that was her chiefest charm. "Why should we not wed? Answer me, Daddy! Why not?"

"Because, my child, you love him—don't you?"

"Yes," she cried perplexedly; "but is that a bar to our union?" (This is simply indescribable sarcasm.)

"Child, you are too, too simple!" said the Colonel argumentatively, leaning forward and crossing his knees. "Don't you see that your undying mutual love makes it a cold-triple-riveted impossibility for you to marry? You are not modern, girl. Wake up! Come to life! I don't know of any particular reason why you and Fitz shouldn't marry; but of course that's the mere flesh and blood man in me that thinks that way; but— Well, the long and short of it is that you've got to marry that damned Yankee promoter that's working up the scheme to put a railroad through this town!"

"But, father!" cried Agones, "I have nothing in common with him, and he hasn't so much as asked me to marry him. Why must I, papa dear?"

The Colonel put a straw into the julep tub and sighed. "Don't ask me; ask the author," he said.





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## Black Light

Continued from page 3

man to give her permission to enter. What pretext could she give for wanting to see the premises, if she inquired at the office on 18th-st? She could think of none. Better think it over and plan a campaign. She had so much information, at least. Now what she had to do was to find some plausible theory to utilize it.

Back she went to her room, and cried herself to sleep, as any other woman would. She missed Astro more than ever. Before, she had a hunger and thirst for his presence; now she wanted his help and protection. Oh, she was sure enough, now! She felt lost without him; she saw how necessary he was to her, how he had made life different, romantic, picturesque.

IT was a sad little Valeska that crept to the studio next day. She took up one of the cushions of his divan and kissed it passionately, buried her face in it for awhile, then sat resolutely down at his desk to work out the mystery of his location. The more she thought of it now, the surer she became that he must have left these clues on purpose to guide her in her search. It would be like him to test her that way; there was a sort of humor in it that, at last, she saw. Well, then, she would be a worthy pupil. She would prove that his lessons had not been without effect. She, too, would be a Seer of Secrets!

With a smile on her lips now, she began the problem. But again she stopped. It was absurd to think of him as being away. She was so used to seeing him here in the studio that she could not take her task seriously. Could not she go into a trance, as he had so often pretended to, and summon him to her, or project her spirit to meet his? Could she not perceive the radiance of his secret black light directly through her intuitions, without this tedious and stupid analytical logical process? As she sat there she could almost feel him at her side, leaning over her shoulder, looking from the door of his laboratory. She looked up with a start from her reverie, and was a little frightened to find herself alone in the great studio with its shadowy corners. Then she went back conscientiously to her study.

What was the meaning of the four addresses? It was evident that he could not be in anyone of the places. Was there any esoteric significance to the Weehawken ferry or Pier 83? She laughed at the idea. All she could gather from the addresses was that Astro was probably in New York. Well, that was something. Her mind jumped to the square with diagonals, to the cross on the envelope. How did they fit in? Why, for all she knew, the pattern on the carpet, or the legs of the chairs could solve the mystery!

NO, there must be some relationship between these things. If these evidences were left purposely, they were correlated one to another. Her mind went back to memories of Astro. He used to jump up and walk back and forth as he considered his problems. So up rose Valeska and began to pace the room.

As she passed the bookshelves, she noticed that one book stuck out a little from the others. It was a volume of Poe's "Tales." She pushed it back and continued her promenade. She went over the addresses again,—Saint Patrick's, Pier 83, 320 Third-ave., the gas works. It came to her vaguely that these places were about equal distances apart. Now could that mean anything? Then she thought that she could consider them more clearly if she had a map.

She went to the shelf, therefore, took down and unfolded a large map of New York, and laid it on the table. She next took four pins from the case in the top drawer and marked each place. They were indeed equal distances apart; she measured them with a ruler. Then she noticed that they seemed to form a square, and tested it with a little rubber triangle Astro used for plotting horoscopes, and found it was true. The sides were about a mile and a quarter long. Again she dropped her chin on her palms and her elbows on the table and studied the pins.

But her thoughts wandered. It seemed as if Astro should be there to help her as he always had. She thought, with a sad smile, that if it was propinquity that had made her love him, propinquity was what she wanted most. But she forced her mind to the subject and remembered the diagram drawn on the blotter of the table. Why, that was a square, too! And it had its diagonals drawn. The hint reached her at last and, seizing a pencil and ruler, she drew in the diagonals on the map, and looked curiously to see where they intersected. On 34th-st., between Seventh and Eighth-aves. But the studio itself was at 250 West 34th-st!

SHE jumped up, then, her hand on her beating heart. Her intuitions, then, were true! She had felt the black light of his presence, though he was invisible! He was in the studio, and had been from the first! He had, perhaps, even looked from the doorway, as she had fancied. She trembled as if at the presence of a ghost, and feared to see him.

But where was he? Must she look in every nook and corner? Should she call him out loud? Hungry for him as she was, she could not yet do that; her heart beat too fast. Yet she longed to tear the mystery open, let in the light again,—the old-fashioned sunlight of his actual visible presence,—and break into tears on his shoulder. She moved across the room on tiptoe now, as if she was guilty of some crime in being there, threw herself on the divan, and tried to think it out.

As she calmed herself, the thought of the book she had replaced on the shelf came to her, and she ran across the studio to take it from

its shelf. It fell open of itself to "The Purloined Letter," and she smiled to herself. That proved her hypothesis to be right. Was not the purloined letter concealed in plain sight, so prominently placed that it escaped the search? Then Astro's hiding place would be as obvious, if she reasoned aright. Could she solve that as she had solved the other, by her intuitions, by means of his black light?

Black light! The very words were enough to tell her. Where should he be, but in the dark room where she first witnessed his experiment, where the little phosphorescent Buddha, though invisible in the dark, still radiated its mysterious waves of energy?

SO it was solved! She hugged herself with delight, and smiled at the prettiness of his plans. How well he knew her and her mental processes—indeed, he must know her very soul, to be so sure of her and her ways! Indeed, he was the Seer of Secrets; for he had seen hers before she had discovered it for herself, had waited with patience and tact till she should know and be sure of her own love for him. A wave of impatience to see him, speak to him, touch him, swept over her.

Of course he had retreated to his hiding place when he had heard the ringing of the bell on the door. She had been there for an hour, and he must be tired of waiting there, well ventilated as the dark room was. So she crossed to the laboratory door, opened the door of the little anteroom, shut it behind her, and put her hand to the inner door, opened it, and listened.

It was black and still. For a moment she almost fainted with the fear that, after all, she might be mistaken and he was not there. Her childhood's terror of the dark returned; but she put it away and tried to speak aloud. Her voice came thin and small in that closed space.

"Astro, I have found you!" she said tremblingly. "I have seen your black light in the dark, and I know, now! I want you, dear!"

She gave a little cry as she felt two arms take her in their grasp. Then the touch of his lips thrilled her, and she laid her head on his shoulder in peace and contentment.

THEN Astro took her out into the light. It blinded them with sunshine so that they staggered and could hardly see.

The trilling of the electric bell aroused them from their trance.

"It is the clergyman and the witnesses," said Astro, smiling. "He is just five minutes ahead of time. I didn't expect you'd find me till eleven o'clock!"

END OF THE SERIES.

### A NEW LANGUAGE

AS surely as a hodgecarrier is known by the mortar on his boots, so did he bear the undisputed marks of being a college professor. And the environment of the city police court was absolutely strange to him. He was there neither as prisoner nor as complainant; but he was deeply interested, and he admitted to a chosen few that he was a student of criminology. He was given a seat where he could hear well, and a detective at the moment off duty volunteered to keep him posted.

A couple of men were brought in, suspected of a "touch" in the downtown district. A slightly befuddled citizen had lost his watch, and as these two worthies were discovered not a thousand miles from the spot, the astute police had come to the conclusion that they might have "found" it.

"Are they habitual criminals?" whispered the college professor, after examining the two "guys" closely.

"Well, I guess yes!" responded the detective glibly. "I copped de bot' of 'em de minute dey was brought in to be mugged. One of 'em's English Harry, an' I pinched him ten years ago. He give a guy de peter, after squarin' de bar-keepers, and then hoisted his kettle. I give him a year for that. His pal there is a moll buzzer, and I got him once for a leather at South' Ferry; but de skoit wouldn't come to court. Up at headquarters there is many squeals against de twos of 'em. Bot' has pulled off many a job, and done many a bit, too!"

Amazement sat large upon the professor's face; his lower jaw fairly sagged as he listened. Finally he turned to a lawyer sitting at his elbow. "Do you know," he said, with painful uncertainty, "I heard what he said; but never in my life before did I so fully realize that language is given to man that he may hide his thoughts. I suppose he speaks English,—er—er—a certain kind, at least,—but really I don't understand a thing he has said!"

The lawyer, with a broad smile, translated. "He merely said that both of these men are professional criminals, and that he recognized them when they were brought to police headquarters to be photographed and measured by the Bertillon system. He said he had arrested the man known as English Harry ten years ago for giving a man knockout drops in some saloon where the barkeepers were willing to allow such a thing to be done for a share of the stealings. The thief took the victim's watch, and, when tried, was sentenced to a year in jail."

"The other," proceeded the interpreter, "is a man who confines himself to stealing from women, and this detective arrested him once at South' Ferry for taking a woman's purse; but the latter would not press the complaint. He also said that there were many complaints filed against both men at police headquarters; that they had both been mixed up in many robberies; and that both had served several sentences in prison."

"Oh, is that it? Thank you!" said the student of criminology, greatly relieved.



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